

English Transcript for *Study Preferences*

Students will often ask me, where should I apply? Which I won't answer. I turn the question around to them and ask them, what do you want in a school? Which they can't answer. What I'll hear most often is, I want a good school. Well, most of the 4,000 universities and colleges in the United States are good, meaning you're going to get a solid education and a Bachelors degree that will take you many places. But what's good for one student is not always good for another. If you don't commit to some preferences, you're going to have 4,000 options for schools that you can apply to. That's the second step of self-assessment. Identifying what it is that you want in a college or university. Just think about what you might like or what you might not like in a university and your experience at the university. You're not committing to anything. You can always change your mind. For example, right now you might be thinking, I want a small school. Great, start researching small schools. You might find that yes, you love small schools. But you might also find that maybe you don't love small schools as much as you thought. If that's the case, no problem. You can change your mind and start researching medium schools. Remember, the goal is to narrow the thousands of options that are available down to a more manageable number. Students will often say, well I want to apply to a top 100 school. Well, that's still gives you 100 options. Too many schools to apply to, and realistically they might not all be a good fit. To narrow your options, you're going to have to decide which of your preferences are most important, what must you have in a university, and which of your preferences you would like, but maybe they're not so necessary. What you're going to find is that some of your preferences, let's say you want a working nuclear reactor on campus, are going to seriously impact your university options. While other preferences like, well I wanna be a business major, will not affect your options because virtually all schools have a business major. Make a list of the things that you want and put that list in the order of how important each piece is. I realize that you're making this list before you have researched even a single university, and that you're probably screaming at the screen, I don't know what's important. It's okay. You don't have to know, because honestly, this list is going to change as you do some research. Start with the basics. What do you think? Would you like to go to school in a big city, or up in the mountains somewhere? Would you comfortable as one of 40,000 student or as 1 of 4,000 students? Go with your instincts. Later, when you begin your search, you're going to test those instincts with what you find. Some preferences might move up your list, while some preferences might be taken off your list altogether. But over time, your preferences should and will grow, particularly if you keep in mind that it's about thriving and not surviving.